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PROBLEMS OF THE ODER-NEISSE LINE

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## PROBLEMS OF THE ODER-NEISSE LINE

I. Introduction

The Oder-Neisse Line has produced more friction and holds more potentialities for future conflict than any of the other problems arising from the settlements made by the victorious Allies at the end of World War II.

The Polish western frontier was established along a line formed by the Oder river west of Stettin to its junction with the Western Neisse and then to the frontier of Czechoslovakia. This involved the transfer of an area of about 40,000 square miles from German to Polish jurisdiction, and the deportation of an estimated seven million Germans back to Germany. 1/

The Germans do not regard the frontier as permanent and claim that on both legal and moral grounds it is unacceptable. The Poles have demonstrated a strong determination to maintain their hold on the area, strengthened by Russia's recognition of their claim.

The Western Allies have recognized Polish ownership de facto but not de jure. The dispute concerns more than the permanent location of the German-Polish border. It is the most recent development in a struggle that has been going on for centuries. It involves differences of economic development, political systems, religion, language and cultural patterns. On its solution depend the political development and economic stability of Eastern Europe, and future German relations with other European powers, both East and West. 2/

II. Historical Background

Although the Poles refer to the newly acquired area between the Oder-Neisse Line and the Polish western frontier of 1939 as the "Recovered Territories," it appears that their historical claim is ill-founded. The Oder-Neisse area comprises three main parts: (1) the former German part of Silesia (the Austrian part of Silesia went to Czechoslovakia in 1919 and Upper Silesia was divided between Germany and Poland after

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a plebiscite in 1921); (2) part of Pomerania called by the Germans Farther Pomerania or Hinterpommern, now known in Polish as "Lake-Pomerania" or Western Pomerania; and (3) the eastern part of the former province of Brandenburg, the Neumark. In the 11th and 12th centuries the area was a part of the kingdom of the Polish dynasty of the Piasts and was inhabited by various Slavic tribes, not all Poles. Since this time it has not been under Polish rule. 3/

German interest and activity in the Slavic East have existed from very early times. The sparse population and undeveloped pastoral economy of the region offered, in general, little resistance to the German settlers who followed German military expansion. Beginning with the successful campaigns of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in the 12th century, the Germans regarded the lands east of the Oder as a natural theater for German conquest, colonization and economic expansion. During the succeeding centuries, German power in Eastern Europe advanced or receded according to the relative strength and weakness of the German and Slavic political and military organizations. In the Oder-Neisse region, however, German domination was established at an early date and was continuous until the post-World War II period.

The different regions of the Oder-Neisse territory did not share an identical historical development. In Silesia, Germans settled sporadically in the region around the Upper Oder valley as early as the 10th century, although effective colonization did not begin until the 11th and 12th centuries. By the beginning of the 13th century, the area had passed from Polish to German control. The new rulers encouraged German colonists and during the following century extensive emigration from the West brought almost all of Silesia under German settlement, except the eastern portion of Upper Silesia, where numerous Polish settlements survived the German influx to furnish the largest group of Polish inhabitants in the Oder-Neisse area today. Detached from Polish domination in the 13th century, the area became the site of numerous principalities mostly under Slavic dynasties which managed for a while to maintain a degree of semi-independence. At the beginning of the 15th century, the princes turned to the Kingdom of Bohemia for protection. The occupation of the Bohemian throne by the Hapsburgs in 1526 incorporated Silesia into the Empire. In 1740 Frederick the Great of Prussia occupied Lower Silesia and obtained formal cession of it from the Hapsburgs. In 1742 he took Upper Silesia and the region became a Prussian province, which it remained, except for Polish Upper Silesia in the period between World War I and II. 4/

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The part of Pomerania now included in the Oder-Neisse territory was ruled by a Slavic duke as a part of the Holy Roman Empire in the 12th century. The medieval period was characterized by dynastic struggles complicated by the fact that the Elector of Brandenburg claimed the ruler's feudal allegiance. Upon the death of the Slavic ruler without issue in 1637 his holdings were claimed by Brandenburg, and eventually incorporated as a province of Prussia. The Neumark province of Brandenburg came under German control in the 13th century when, under the Order of the Teutonic Knights, it became one of the three subdivisions of Brandenburg. In 1373 the Elector acquired it from the Order and it remained an integral part of his territory until it was organized as a province of the Kingdom of Prussia, which subsequently formed part of the modern German state after the unification of 1871. Thus although the three sections had been subject to various rulers, the territory has been substantially German for centuries. 5/

The population of the region was predominantly German and German-speaking although not exclusively so. The pre-World War II population was estimated to be between eight and a half and ten million persons, of which not more than one and a half million were Poles. 6/ Only in Upper Silesia was there a sufficient number of Poles present to give rise to a minority problem. In general, the character of Pomerania, Brandenburg and Silesia was not to be distinguished from other parts of northern Germany. 7/

Until the 18th century the question of nationality was not important to the inhabitants of the area. Many in fact did not know to what nationality they belonged. With the rise of national states there began to be a more intense interest in nationality and ethnic characteristics. The Poles, after the partitions of the 18th century, made a determined effort to preserve the idea of a Polish national state and Polish ethnic, religious and cultural traditions. The Germans, alarmed at the success of the Polish campaign, took measures to Germanize the regions, acquired through the Polish partitions, intensifying efforts to attract German settlers and establish the German language. 8/

The distinction between Germans and Poles was magnified by economic conditions. In Silesia, the industrial revolution which began in the 18th century produced a complex of coal mines, iron and steel works, and armament factories which in the 19th century rivaled the Ruhr in wealth and productivity. This development was largely the product of German capital and administration and Polish labor. In the industrial towns,

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mainly in the Upper Silesian region, the more prosperous groups were the German owners and officials, while Polish peasants who worked in the mines and as unskilled labor, lived in poverty and squalor. The Germans came increasingly to regard the Poles as inferior beings, incapable of rising to the German technical or cultural level. In the agricultural areas, the caste distinction was not so plainly marked. 9/

In addition to language and economic status, religion was traditionally a divisive force. While the Poles were predominantly Catholic, the Germans shared the Protestantism of North Germany. In Silesia in the 16th century, Lutheranism and Calvinism won many adherents, particularly among the Germans in some of the Lower Silesian towns. Protestantism continued to exist although due to the Counter Reformation in the 17th century, considerable numbers of Germans in the area became Catholic. That religion became an issue between the two races is indicated by the fact that in the 18th century in one small section of Austrian Silesia around Teschen, the Poles stubbornly maintained the Lutheran church as a means of resisting Catholic authority, while in Prussian Silesia they increasingly supported Catholicism to distinguish themselves from the Protestant Germans. 10/

The conflict between Germans and Slavs erupted with explosive force in World War I. The World War I peace settlements, in general, favored Slavs over Germans. They left, however, large German minorities within the new Slav states which were to be a source of irredentist agitation.

The problem of what to do with the rich Silesian industrial triangle proved to be one of the more difficult faced by the peacemakers after World War I. Under Article 88 of the Versailles Treaty, the assignment of Upper Silesia to Poland or Germany was to be determined by a plebiscite. The area was placed under an International Commission, composed of representatives of Great Britain, France and Italy. Disorders broke out between Polish volunteers, led by a Polish nationalist named Korfanty, and remnants of the Germany Army (Freikorps) in 1919 and again in 1920.

The plebiscite was held in March 1921. The majority of the inhabitants voted to remain with Germany. However, over 40 per cent of the population, concentrated in the southern and

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eastern countries, voted to join Poland. In May 1921, the Poles rose in revolt against the plebiscite result. They were opposed by General Hofer and the Freikorps. The resulting strife worked considerable hardship on civilians and deepened enmity on both sides. Order was restored by French and British troops in 1922. 11/

The problem was submitted to a League of Nations committee which decided that Upper Silesia should be divided in accordance with the vote of the individual communes. This decision gave the larger and richer part to Poland. It was also decided that for 15 years the unity of the region was to be preserved, giving it some autonomy. By the Geneva Convention, existing economic relationships were maintained or gradually modified while new ones were being created. The Convention ran its full 15 years and generally worked well, although both Germans and Poles complained frequently to the neutral League administrators. The period is of interest today as an example of a successful German-Polish "condominium" in practice. 12/

Neither Poland nor Germany was satisfied with the World War I boundaries. The Polish Corridor in particular was resented by both. The sizable German minorities in Poland remained German in orientation and were willing to be used by Hitler as Fifth Columnists against the Polish government. Tension and suspicion grew between the two powers during the inter-war years.

The occupation of Poland by the Germans during World War II was carried out with great thoroughness and relentless harshness. The Polish population was a source of slave labor and their natural resources and industries were ruthlessly exploited. In line with Nazi racist theories, the Poles were treated as "subhuman beings" (Untermenschen) which created additional hatred of the Germans, and a determination to prevent German aggression in the future. 13/

### III. Birth of the Oder-Neisse Line

In considering what should be done with Germany after the war, the three Allied powers were agreed that some form of partition was justified as retribution for aggression and to deter its repetition. The form of the partition to be adopted was not defined. 14/ On the specific problem of the Polish frontiers, Stalin made an early claim to the territory east of the Curzon line. In return for Allied recognition of Russian annexation of this area, he indicated a willingness to

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agree to the acquisition by Poland of German territory in the West. Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to this general design, convinced as they were of the desirability of breaking up Prussia and of strengthening Poland against any future German aggression. Churchill wrote after the meeting of the Allies in Teheran in November 1953: "personally I thought Poland might move westward, like soldiers taking two steps 'left close.' If Poland trod on some German toes, that could not be helped, but there must be a strong Poland." In the formula put forward at the end of the meeting which summed up the discussions, it was stated that "the home of the Polish state ... should be between the ... Curzon line and the line of the Oder ... the actual tracing of the frontier lines requires careful study, and possibly disentanglement of population at some point." 15/

Acceptance by the Western Allies of the change in the border and the transfers of large numbers of Germans from the area was indicated in statements by Churchill and Roosevelt. Churchill, in an interview with Polish Premier Mikolajczyk in January 1944, told him that about seven million Germans living between the German-Polish border and the Oder would be transported into Germany proper, a commitment which Roosevelt reaffirmed to Mikolajczyk in November 1944. 16/

By February 1945, when the Big Three met at Yalta, the Western Allies faced a dilemma. They needed Russian assurance of help in the Pacific, but at the same time they became aware of the problems involved in the "disentanglement" of populations, and the threat implied by the Communist regime in Poland. Churchill remarked: "It would be a pity to stuff the Polish goose so full of German food that it died of indigestion." The three heads of governments finally agreed that Poland must be given substantial territory in the north and west and that the final delimitation of the western border should await the Peace Conference. 17/

Almost immediately thereafter the Polish Communist authorities announced that the administration of the country up to the Oder and the Western Neisse had been taken over by them. At the meeting of the Big Three in Potsdam in July 1945, the US and Great Britain recognized the Polish fait accompli by agreeing that all the territory claimed by Stalin and Bierut for Poland should be under Polish administration, although the three powers agreed again that final delimitation of the border should await the peace settlement. 18/

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#### IV. The German Point of View

In an effort to make this territorial acquisition permanent, the victors at once began the wholesale deportation of the German inhabitants. Aggravated by the bitterness of the Poles, who had endured the German occupation, and the post-war shortages of transportation, food, sanitary facilities and shelter, the transfer was accomplished only with considerable hardship to those involved. The forced expulsion, accompanied as it was by loss of property and physical suffering, in some cases unavoidable but in other cases increased by the harshness of revengeful Poles, inevitably created bitterness among the German expellees. During the next two years, about seven million Germans returned to be absorbed within the shrunken borders of Potsdam Germany. About one million Germans remained in Poland and were accepted by the Polish authorities as "autochthones" or an indigenous population. 19/ Thus the new Polish state avoided the danger of large, unassimilated minorities within its national borders. However, the sense of a national grievance was not dispelled. The expellees became a pressure group within Germany itself. 20/

Organized into a political party, the Expellees and Victims of Injustice (Block der Heimatvertriebenen und Entzweckten - BHE), and various ethnic groups (Landsmannschaften), the exiles are capable of wielding considerable influence in national politics. They claim the right to return to their former homes on both legal and moral grounds. On legal grounds the Germans argue that the British and Americans only agreed to the expansion of Poland to the West on condition that a free and democratic Poland be established, a condition which has not been fulfilled. They further claim that the Atlantic Charter excluded the possibility of the annexation of German territory by the Poles. However, the Poles made it plain that they would never accept the inviolability of German territory and Churchill stated that there would be "no question of the Atlantic Charter applying to Germany as a matter of right" or barring territorial adjustments at the expense of Germany and her allies. 21/ To enforce their moral right to the lost lands, the expellees have developed the doctrine of the Recht auf die Heimat, the basic right of every human being to his homeland. This concept has become a fundamental tenet of the exile groups and has been acknowledged as well by a number of Germans prominent in West German political life. In addition to the right to one's homeland, the expellees also claim that the initiative and hard work which the Germans put into developing the eastern provinces have given them a lasting equity in them. 22/

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The expellees have given considerable thought as to how their claims might some day be met. All responsible spokesmen agree that war would provide no solution. Various plans have been put forward, most of them based on some sort of federal organization which would permit ethnic groups recognition and some degree of autonomy. The fact, however, that the problem of the revision of the eastern border could only be approached after the solution of the far more serious problem of the reunification of Germany itself has tended to discourage detailed planning for this area. 23/

Although the expellees represent the most active revisionist force in Western Germany at present, two factors have worked to moderate their demands. The first is the effort which has been made to integrate them into the Federal Republic. Expellee government officials were pensioned or received jobs comparable to those they had previously held. Federal legislation granted special financial aid to West German employers who engaged expellee labor. Expellee craftsmen were encouraged to set up small factories to continue their ancient crafts. The second moderating factor has been the high level of economic prosperity the Federal Republic has enjoyed since the outbreak of the Korean War. The boom in West German industry has absorbed most of the employable expellees, many of whom are enjoying a higher standard of living than they did in their former homes. An economic recession could reverse this situation (since the expellees are less firmly established financially and would be the first to be affected) and greatly increase the demand for the return of the eastern territories. To date the trend has been towards integration of the expellees into the West German Republic, and a diminishing desire to recross the Oder. 24/

Because expellee votes are politically important in Western Germany, and could be decisive, both the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats have refused to recognize the present border as permanent. However, the present government has not yet evolved a coherent policy for dealing with the problem. Adenauer recently made it clear that he would not negotiate any settlement with the USSR involving recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. In 1953 in an interview with the Associated Press, he suggested that the German eastern territories could perhaps be administered as a German-Polish condominium or be placed under the United Nations. The refugees protested to such an extent that Adenauer disclaimed having made the suggestion which has not been mentioned subsequently. The Ministry of Refugees and Expellees, while dedicated to the integration of the exiles into the Federal Republic, has nevertheless consistently encouraged them to maintain their dialects, customs and traditions. It has also subsidized several institutions, dedicated to the study of eastern problems such as the East Europe Institute at the

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Free University in Berlin, the former Breslau Institute now located in Munich, and the German Society for East European Information, of which Klaus Mehnert is the secretary and guiding spirit. A number of similar study groups have been sponsored by the Kaiser Ministry of All-German Affairs. 25/

Recent reports that many of the "autochthonous" are returning voluntarily to Germany may indicate that although the German government officially still claims rights in the Oder-Neisse lands, the people are in fact becoming resigned to their loss. About 16,000 of the autochthonous Germans returned last year and it is believed that as many as 90,000 may follow this year. A total of 160,000 have asked to leave and the Poles are facilitating their departure. 26/

It is difficult to assess the real strength of the popular feeling in Germany for revision of the border. There is plainly a strong desire for reunification of Germany. If this were accomplished, the strength of the revisionist sentiment would probably depend on a number of factors, including the condition of the German economy and the extent of German integration into Western Europe.

The Soviet-dominated East German regime has recognized the Polish-German border as final--a decision of political expediency which would not necessarily survive reunification with Western Germany. 27/

#### V. The Polish Point of View

To the Poles the present western border is immutable. They feel that their ownership of the Oder-Neisse lands is justified by their ancient occupancy of them and by their right to recompense for the territories in the east annexed by Russia at the end of World War II. They argue that their claim was recognized by Allied acceptance of Polish administration at Potsdam and that the "final delimitation" to be made at the Peace Conference was intended to confirm, not to alter substantially, the territorial changes already agreed upon. The Poles further argue that the mass deportation of Germans from the area, approved by the Allies, means that the changes were intended to be permanent as such drastic measures would hardly have been adopted as a temporary arrangement. 28/

The integration of the "Recovered Territories" into the rest of Poland was said to be one of the primary goals of the first Polish post-war plan announced in 1947. 29/ A special

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ministry for the "Recovered Territories" was established and Polish settlers from the Eastern areas which were lost to Russia and from the densely populated parts of southern Poland, were encouraged to resettle the former German lands. Under the Three Year Plan the western territories achieved a considerable degree of recovery, both agricultural and industrial. The advent of the Six Year Plan in 1949, which emphasized industrial rather than agricultural production, the suppression of the Ministry for the "Recovered Territories," and the drive to collectivize the peasants slowed down the rate of agricultural progress. However, it soon became apparent that the growing industrial population needed increased food supplies. In the winter of 1951-1952 a new campaign was begun to encourage the resettlement of the western area. 30/ The effort is continuing, and a recent policy statement by Gomulka indicated that substantial economic concessions are to be granted, including reductions in compulsory agricultural deliveries, land leases on favorable terms, and financial aid for settlers. 31/

In spite of relocation of refugees from the East and of the program of special inducements, the area now supports between five and six million Poles in comparison to its pre-war population of about 10 million Germans. A recent eyewitness description of the Oder-Neisse territory states that many farms have been abandoned. Agricultural production is admitted even by Communist authorities to have declined from pre-war levels. Small industries, under the pressure of nationalization and heavy taxation, also have decreased. 32/ The Germans have used these facts to bolster their arguments that the Poles are incapable of developing the area without German industry and that it is, in any case, wrong to expel the former owners only to allow the land to lie waste. The Poles have countered with statements that the situation has greatly improved since the destruction of the wartime occupation and that time and the high Polish birth rate will make the territory fully productive. 33/

The most important aspect of the newly acquired area, however, is the opportunity for industrial development which the Poles now possess. With the Oder-Neisse territory, the Poles got substantial increases in natural resources, the most important of which are coal, lignite, zinc and lead ores, plus the industrial complex of former German Silesia. The accession of new territory has changed the economic structure of Poland from a predominantly agricultural country to one more nearly balanced between industrial and agricultural production. At the same time, the proportion of heavy to light industry has changed to the advantage of the former. The acquisition of the port of Stettin, combined with the Oder river and the Silesian basin, constitute an integrated system of industries and transportation, offering the Poles the means of becoming an economically viable state. 34/

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Both the first Three Year Plan and the subsequent Six Year Plan aimed at developing heavy industry and increasing the nation's industrial production. The coal mines and factories of Silesia played a significant part in this program. Although complete statistics are lacking, it appears that coal production in 1954 was almost equal to that of 1943. The Polish steel industry and the production of lead and zinc have developed. The production of power and chemicals has increased.

The development of the industrial potential of the region, particularly of the rich Upper Silesian industrial area, is important not only to Poland but also to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany whose economies are linked with it. Czech and Polish cooperation was recognized as essential after the war and a beginning was made in the period before the Communist regime had secured complete control in Poland and before the coup in Czechoslovakia. A treaty was signed in 1947 to establish a Polish-Czechoslovak economic council to coordinate planning, technical organization and investment. A treaty was also signed with Hungary in May 1948.

The succeeding period of Communist government directed from Moscow altered these relationships. The cooperation between Czechs and Poles did not cease, in fact in some areas it increased, but it was directed according to Russian rather than Satellite interest. For example, work on the Oder-Danube canal which would benefit Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary was dropped, although construction continued of canals to join the Oder with the Vistula and the Bug (lines of communication favoring Russian interests). The integration of East Germany into the Bloc economy has caused bitterness in Poland because the Germans are still regarded with suspicion. 35/

While the acquisition of the Oder-Neisse territory improves the economic prospects of the Poles, it has tied them politically more closely to the USSR. The USSR is the only great power which has recognized the line and is, therefore, the principal Polish reliance against German irredentism. How vulnerable this makes the Poles to Russian pressure is illustrated by a news story, appearing under a Warsaw dateline, 28 January 1957, stating that the East German Communist leaders were reported to have hinted to Polish officials that their attitude on the question of Poland's western frontier might be affected by recent Polish developments. Poles who believed the report thought it represented an East German protest against the democratization of Polish life and the recasting of Polish economic agreements according to national rather than Bloc interest. 36/ The story subsequently was denied by both the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Polish foreign ministries and the "inviolability"

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of the present frontier was reaffirmed, but the fact that the rumor circulated in Warsaw shows how easily the issue may be manipulated by both the USSR and the East Germans to apply pressure on the Poles. 37/

The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church poses another problem for the Poles. The Vatican takes the position that the question of the Oder-Neisse frontier should be settled by a peace treaty. Recently, the Polish government newspaper stated that the Holy See's agreement to appoint bishops in the western territories did not mean that there had been any change in Vatican policy toward recognition. It had claimed that the Vatican's action was "confirmation of the inviolability of the frontiers ... on the Oder and Neisse and the Baltic." It is possible that the announcement was a condition for the Vatican agreement on appointments. 38/

#### VI. Attitudes of US, Britain and Exile Groups

Since 1945, neither the US nor the British have recognized the Oder-Neisse line as final. They have restated the Potsdam position that the Polish administration is provisional and that the frontier will be delimited finally only in conjunction with a German peace treaty. Although no guarantees have been made to Germany that the Western Allies would support her claims for a return to the 1937 line, the lack of a definite policy possibly has encouraged some Germans to hope that such support might be forthcoming. 39/

The opinion that the Oder-Neisse lands are basically Slav, not German, is shared not only by the Polish nation but also by the Poles in exile. Some of the exile groups have joined exile Czechs and Hungarians in endorsing an Eastern European Slav federation which would control the Silesian industrial triangle. 40/ Others visualize a bloc of free eastern states ("Inter Maria") stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea to include Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania, providing protection against Germany and Russia. 41/ All the exiles' proposals, however, agree on excluding the Germans from future East European development.

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## VII. Soviet Attitude

The USSR alone, of the great powers, has recognized the Polish claim to the Oder-Neisse territories. Russia is well aware that the Oder-Neisse problem gives it an effective lever of control in its relations with the Poles and other Slav states. A German demand for a return of even a portion of the territories is represented as a threat of renewed German aggression. At present, there is no indication that the Soviets are contemplating any change in policy. However, it cannot be doubted that they recognize the issue as a useful counter in the struggle for political power between East and West and as an effective propaganda theme within the Bloc.

## VIII. Possible Developments

The Oder-Neisse problem is significant because it is part of the larger problem of peace in Europe. As far as US interests are concerned, it is plain that Russia has the capability of direct action which the US does not possess. Should Russia decide that a German settlement is more useful to her than Polish adherence, it is possible that she might make a deal with the Germans at the expense of Poland. The offer of German reunification and settlement of the Oder-Neisse problem on Bonn's terms in return for a withdrawal from NATO and a declaration of neutrality would have a tremendous appeal for many Germans.<sup>42/</sup> Since the Polish commitment to the Oder-Neisse line is irrevocable, such a solution could be expected to have a serious effect upon Soviet-Polish relations.

In view of the present precariously balanced relationship between the two, and Moscow's efforts to maintain the Satellite empire intact, it is doubtful such a drastic change would be made at this time. Furthermore, Russia appears to believe that in time disruptive tensions among the Western nations will cause NATO to disintegrate and seems to be willing to wait for this to happen as a solution.

Another possibility is that the current relaxation of the Soviet hold on Poland may permit Warsaw and Bonn to work out a general understanding on some common problems which would allow the Poles to edge gradually out of the Soviet orbit. Such a permanent, acceptable settlement appears to be an indispensable precondition for a higher degree of Polish independence. The

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Adenauer government's gradual approach to reestablishment of formal relations with Poland, the rise in Polish-West German trade, and the increasing numbers of Polish businessmen and tourists going to West Germany indicate such a development. A German-Polish rapprochement would make the Poles less dependent on Russia, would weaken the Soviet hold in Eastern Europe, and improve the prospects for a general European settlement. Such a rapprochement, however, might also tend to draw West Germany towards some form of neutralism and away from cooperation with the West. 43/

#### IX. Dilemma Facing US Policymakers

The Oder-Neisse problem presents the US with a dilemma. Support of our ally, the West German Federal Republic, seems to require, if not adherence to the German position, at least no overt move against it. However, it is plainly to the interest of the United States to encourage Poland's move towards greater independence from Soviet control.

The Oder-Neisse issue is one which has tied Polish policy closely to the USSR and, therefore, appears to be an area whose exploitation might prove advantageous to the US. It has been suggested that a Western guarantee of Polish frontiers might help the Poles gain greater freedom, although this might only excite German intransigence without giving the Poles any real security in exchange. However, a compromise containing some face-saving concessions to Germany and the expellees and, while not completely supporting the present frontier at least abjured further partition of Poland or mass deportation of Polish settlers, would perhaps encourage the Poles to feel that their dependence on the Russian guarantee was not total. 44/ The outcome depends on the struggle for power between East and West and on the evolving relationships within the Soviet Bloc.

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